

Teaching Social Media Literacy with Storytelling and Social Media Curation

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

Social media (SM) such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become important communication channels for companies, citizens, public authorities, and various public persons as for example politicians. For many of these players, it has become common to break news first in SM before communicating them over conventional communication channels. Consequently SM have become an important source of information and news. Recent developments have, however, shown that SM are also an environment where fake news can easily be launched and spread. Thus, in order to use SM as information sources students have to develop SM literacy skills. In analogy to the generic 7i-model for information literacy (Stanoevska-Slabeva et al. 2015), SM literacy is defined as the ability to effectively and efficiently retrieve and use information from SM.

According to the 7i-Model a student is SM literate if he/she is able (Stanoevska-Slabeva et al. 2015): i1) to determine SM information needs in a problem-driven manner; i2) to determine which SM platforms apply best to meet the identified information needs; i3) to identify methods and search strategies that suit best to access the selected SM platforms; i4) to evaluate whether the found information are valid and reliable; i5) to use the found information appropriately in order to solve the problem; i6) to present the information geared to a specific target group and communication channel; i7) to reflect upon the applied information search and processing procedures and the information resulting from them.

In order to teach students SM literacy, a teaching concept was developed that combines storytelling with SM curation. Students were asked to choose a topic that was discussed in SM and to develop an interactive story by using the tool Storify. For each sub-competence (from 1i to 7i) of the 7i information literacy model specific input was provided. For example, first the different SM platforms were characterized according to type of information that they provide. Based on this knowledge, the student can on one hand consider social media as a potential source of information while defining the problem specific information needs (i1). On the other hand, it helps to determine which SM is a suitable source of information for a certain task (i2). Then for each SM platform input was provided how it can be searched (i.e. how can the Twitter or Facebook search engine be used) (i3). Further platform specific input was provided on how SM information can be validated (i4). For example what does a verified account mean, what are characteristics of original sources of information on the different platforms, how can the contributions of various users be checked. Several contributions also provided insights how SM information can be clustered and analyzed by using available online tools (i5). Finally the students were instructed how to publish the story in an interactive manner and how to spread the created story through SM (i6). Reflection upon the achieved results during each step was stimulated by providing feedback among students and from the lecturer after each step (i7). Based on all these inputs students got the task to create a story with Storify by curating and combining information from SM platforms considered to be relevant for the story topic they have chosen. Within one semester students were able to create an interactive story that includes well selected original inputs from at least three different SM platforms.

References

Stanoevska-Slabeva, K., Mueller S., Seufert, S., Scheffler, N. 2015. Towards Modeling and Measuring Information Literacy in Secondary Education. In Proceedings of the Thirty Sixth International Conference on Information Systems, Fort Worth 2015.